



CONSUMERS' GUIDE

APRIL 11, 1938



CONSUMERS' GUIDE

APRIL 11, 1938

VOLUME V, NUMBER 1

A Publication of the

Agricultural Adjustment Administration
Consumers' Counsel Division
D. E. MONTGOMERY, Consumers' Counsel

Issued Every Two Weeks

Address all inquiries to the Editor, Consumers' Guide
U. S. Department of Agriculture . . . Washington, D. C.
MARY TAYLOR, Editor

A NEW DRESS for our cover, some new type arrangements inside, mark the beginning of our fifth volume with this issue.

These external changes betoken no change in the kind of subject matter which will continue to appear in the *Consumers' Guide*.

From its earliest days in 1933, this bulletin, published under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture in the administration of the Agricultural Adjustment and the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Acts, has attempted to translate technical information into language for lay readers; to interpret to nonfarm consumers the economic problems of the farm population; to show the relation of city consumer interests to the welfare of the producers of farm products; to encourage those habits of buying which will make for greater stability in the markets for farm products; to promote the more effective use of city consumers' purchasing power and so increase the market for farm products; to aid rural consumers in making more effective use of their income and so assist in restoring farm purchasing power to parity levels.

Twice in its brief history, the demand for the *Consumers' Guide* has

overtaxed the limits placed on our circulation. Both in 1935 and again in 1937 we had to notify subscribers that all who failed to return a request for renewal of subscription would have their names dropped from our mailing list.

Again we are close to the maximum permitted circulation. We are not circularizing our readers concerning a third renewal at this time, but . . . **we request any who now receive the bulletin and do not have urgent need of it to notify us so that their names may be dropped.**

A wise rule for readers who want to refer to back issues from time to time is to keep their copies on file, since our supply of back copies is in many instances either very low or entirely exhausted.

SOME CONSUMER questionmarks are rapidly becoming outmoded. Questionmark No. 1, not so long ago, used to be: "Do consumers really want more technical facts about the goods they buy than they now get from labels, advertisements, and store clerks?" Apparently the majority vote is a "Yes," and the demand for facts is recognized by

an increasing number of tradespeople as both immediate and honorable.

A survey made by one prominent retail trade journal recently showed that of 102 representative stores throughout the country, "close to 64 percent of them have instructed buyers to get specific information about fiber content on all merchandise bought." While only 29 percent of these stores stated that they knew of groups in their communities that were pressing for merchandise facts, the others have evidently felt the groundswell.

Advanced to No. 1 position among consumer questionmarks is: What kind of facts do consumers want which they are not now getting? Trade publications are exploring for the answer to this one. One paper which tried out this question on 750 consumers—housewives, professional women, and senior students of Home Economics—has some interesting answers.

Top on the list of facts these consumers wanted on garment tags was information about color permanence. Three out of 4 wanted this. Other facts which should be on garment tags, and the percentage of these consumers who favored them were: fiber contents, 71; washability and washing instructions, 67; shrinkage, 65; correct size, 35; dry cleaning, 31; name of manufacturer, 19; wearability, 16; instructions on care, 12; silk weighting, 11. Almost 10 percent of the women answering this questionnaire wanted information showing whether the garment was manufactured in a union shop.

Home-furnishing tags should also tell consumers facts about their contents, say 72 percent of these consumers. Other demands and the votes in support of them for this group of articles include: washability and instructions, 57 percent; color permanence, 46; construction, workmanship, 35; wearability and durability, 27; instructions on care, 22; tensile strength and quality, 21; inner construction (filling, springs, etc.) 20; thread count, 13. Here, too, some consumers want to know whether the product is union-made, but the percentage interested in this fact is not reported.



Behind the Fruit and Vegetable Counter

Leg No. 1 of a consumer tour from farm to market with foods starred by nutritionists and prized by moderns

UP POPPED SOMEONE looking for publicity several months ago to say that the smart feminine apparel for the coming year would include bouquets of fruits and vegetables. Along with the announcement came a picture showing several mannequins modeling a gown with a corsage of carrots, a hat with a head of lettuce on the crown instead of an artificial flower, and finally, the mannequins were garnished, so to speak, with a necklace of radishes. Green peas, the story ran, could be just as interesting for earrings as jade.

Couturiers may put fruits and vegetables up among the gems, precious and semi-precious, that people whose tastes run that way will wear, but



there are a great number of people whose tastes run to vegetables and fruits for other reasons—because they are an invaluable source of minerals, vitamins, and other basic food elements humans need to live on, to work on, and to stay healthy on. To many people, talking about fruits and vegetables as gems, is no joke. Says the Federal Trade Commission in a report on Fruits and Vegetables that is as bulky as it is comprehensive, "most of the fruits and vegetables may be regarded as in the luxury or semi-luxury class for

4 a considerable part of the population at all times, and particularly in periods of reduced employment and relatively low salaries and wages."

To farmers the stylist's fad is even less of a joke, for certainly the man whom the Federal Trade Commission describes as receiving a 2-cent stamp in payment for 10 barrels of potatoes, could not have felt that he had been picking diamonds out of his potato hills at harvest time.

● **PUT IN TERMS** of 2-cent stamp returns to farmers and gold-plated prices to consumers, the fruit and vegetable problem is misstated. Millions of consumers will be eating millions of pounds of fruits and vegetables this year, as they do each year. They will be consuming many more pounds than they used to. In 1935-36 consumers ate twice as much fresh asparagus, almost 3 times as many fresh peas, and more than twice as much lettuce and carrots as they ate in 1919-20. Citrus fruit consumption per capita went up from 21 pounds a year in 1919-20 to 37 pounds in 1935-36, and noncitrus fruit from 174 to 183 pounds.

More fruits and vegetables find their way to consumers' tables as people become aware of their nutritive treasures and are able to buy them, as growers increase their supply, as science and economics shorten the distance between farms and kitchens.

To put these foods within reach of the people who consume them provides occupation for hundreds of thousands of people in planting, growing, harvesting, packing, shipping, hauling, keeping records, arranging for credit, making payments and charges, billing and receipting, inspecting, doing a million and one things to the annual supply of fruits and vegetables that add up to the completely meaningless figure (since it is so large) of 25 million tons with a cash value to farmers of 1,165 million dollars in 1937. This is almost $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as much as the cash value of the cotton crop for the same year, more than the cash value of all grain crops, and about 14 percent of the total amount of money derived by farmers from all farming activities.

It takes gears to fit all these activities together and sometimes the gears

do not mesh. Then there are problems. And in most cases they are all double-action problems that worry the farmer coming and going. Take the weather, for example. A man has trouble enough when his growing and harvesting depend upon something as capricious as the weather. Not only will a frost blight his plants, it also may make it impossible to sell his produce. If Louisiana strawberries ripen too quickly, they may start flooding into market before all the Florida strawberries are eaten. The result is a glut of strawberries; prices drop perhaps so low that what the berries bring in a city market will not pay the cost of shipping them there. A good many strawberries under such circumstances won't go to market at all. For consumers then there is smaller total supply of strawberries and higher prices.

● **CONSUMERS** don't go outside early in the morning, cock a weather eye at the sky, look at the barometer and then say, "Today let's have lemon ice for dinner." That is, they think they don't; but they do something very similar to that. Consumer weather is

almost as important to growers as producer weather. The third week of hot weather, lemon people say, doubles the consumption of lemons over the second week, but if there is a cool summer or a cool spell lemons that go to market merely stay there. Of course, they can be stored, but the immediate effect is to start prices dropping off quickly. Watermelons, on the other hand, cannot be stored; if they ripen and arrive in cold weather they become just so many watermelons no one wants, and just so much labor lost for producers.

These are the effects of weather when it is capricious. Even normal weather changes complicate things for the fruit and vegetable grower and consumer. There are seasonal changes. In this big country, growing seasons occur at different times in different places. Before the crop of potatoes from one section is marketed, a new crop of potatoes from another section comes to market. This happens every year. One section of the country, enjoying growing weather, may have city markets to itself for part of the time; at other times it must compete with other sections as seasons change.

UNCONTROLLABLE WHIMS of the great ocean of air at the bottom of which we live have much to do with the way fruit and vegetable prices to farmers and consumers move up and down. Weather Bureau reports help to mitigate hazards to production and to improve chances for advantageous marketing.



Science is constantly trying to get the better of nature, by developing new methods of preserving and transporting foods; by developing new strains of plants that can survive weather changes or grow in new areas.

Fruits and vegetables are perishable. They must be harvested and got to the market quickly. Going there they must be packed, iced sometimes, heated at other times, and shot right through terminals and stores into consumers' homes and eaten. If there is any delay, there is simply more work for the Department of Sanitation.

Handling things labeled perishable is an expensive business. How expensive is indicated by the Federal Trade Commission's study of the chain store patron's fruit and vegetable dollar in 1935. Reached by throwing together averages for 5 fruits and 5 vegetables the story of the consumer's dollar tells little about any one fruit or vegetable, but much about an important economic fact. Of the consumer's fruit and vegetable dollar in 1935, packing and shipping and hauling took a third; another third went to the distributors, and of this, some 29 cents went to the retailer; a third went to the grower.

● **AT THAT**, for all the expeditiousness and for all the care with which fruit and vegetables are handled, they don't come through without casualties. The Federal Trade Commission, for instance, cites a report made by a chain store over a period of 2 years in which a record of all fruit and vegetable spoilage was kept and which showed that 9 percent of the oranges, about 8 percent of the apples, 15 percent of the grapes, about 2 percent of the potatoes, about 15 percent of the lettuce, about 5 percent of the onions, 24 percent of the cabbages and 18 percent of the tomatoes were lost en route to market. For tomatoes, it has been estimated that a chain store purchases $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of tomatoes for each pound it actually sells. And this, of course, is the toll of fruit and vegetable mortality in only one of the stations through which fruits and vegetables must pass. At each stopping point from field to consumer, some fruits



TO GET MAXIMUM RETURNS for their labors, farmers need to be expert both in producing and marketing their wares. To reduce the guesswork involved in adjusting supplies to market capacity, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics furnishes market reports, the AAA provides machinery for control of shipments.

and vegetables are left by the way.

To these losses en route to market consumers must add the enormous quantities of good food that don't get shipped at all. Too abundant supplies of fruits and vegetables clog fruit and vegetable channels so that low tide prices won't float them. Then they are left high and dry on producers' farms to rot. In 1933, for example, as the result of a bountiful Florida harvest, celery prices dropped so low that they did not cover the harvesting costs. Producers then had nothing to do but to let their celery stand and rot in the fields, 328 thousand crates of it, with each crate representing 70 celery stalks. At the bottom of the statistical tables issued by the Department of Agriculture there is a footnote to almost every fruit and vegetable which tells quickly and impersonally the same tale of fruitlessness in the fruit and vegetable trade. "These production statistics," the footnote reads, "also include quantities not harvested because of market conditions."

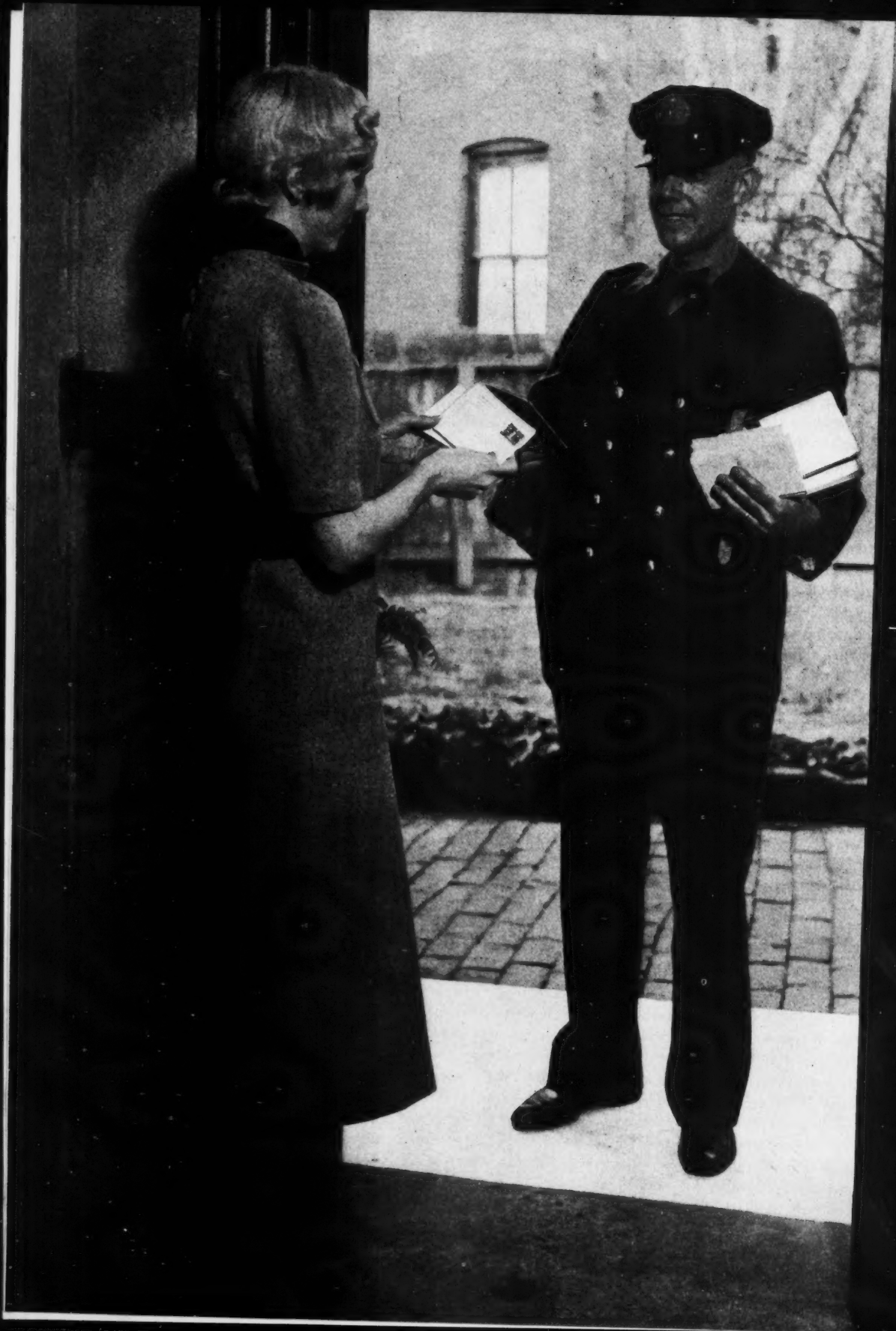
Some fruits and vegetables are produced in every one of the 48 States, but heaviest supplies usually come from a few States that are very likely

thousands of miles from consumer markets.

In each of the States where a particular vegetable is a specialty crop, the season means that farmers suddenly begin to sell their produce to people who live all over America. And there you have problems that knit the brows of fruit and vegetable farmers.

● **DISTANCE** may make a field look green but in fruit and vegetable marketing it creates problems. A farmer in Texas who sells his grapefruit through a commission merchant he has never seen, and for prices he can't verify, has something to scratch his head about. Commission merchants, like most people, are mostly honest and reliable, but the absolute dependence of the farmer remote from consumer markets upon someone he doesn't know and will very likely never see creates an opportunity for dishonest people to step in and get a dishonest dollar. The commission merchant sells the grapefruit for the farmer, and he reports the price to him and on the basis of what he reports he deducts his commission and his ex-

[Concluded on page 18]

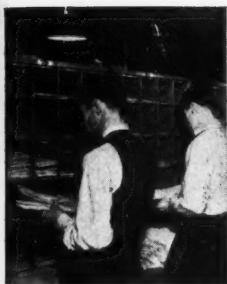


H
C
G

SA
tia
zen
pu
ter
em
arm
a c
no
the
pe
or
ag
cro
liv
the
m

son
su
the
the
du
fair
Po
to
de

pa
ne
gr
for
you
of
Dr
the
con
ves



Post Office Guardians of Consumers

Closing the mails to fraudulent schemes is another way Government tries to protect consumer pocketbooks

SANCTITY of the mails is an essential protection cherished by every citizen in a democracy. In peace times no public official—not even the Postmaster General—unless he is an authorized employee of the dead letter office, or is armed with a search warrant issued by a court, may open any letter which is not addressed to him. Not only must the mails be safe from robbery or tampering or prying by criminals or spies, or even by the Government's own agents, they must also be safe from crooks who want Uncle Sam to deliver fraudulent advertising and collect the proceeds for them. "The mails must go through"—but not to defraud.

Buying goods over the counter sometimes may be a hazard for the consumer but buying goods by mail leaves the customer no choice but to rely on the good faith of the seller. To reduce the number of cases in which that faith is sure to be disappointed, the Post Office Department has the duty to see that the mails are not used to defraud.

Fraud work of the Post Office Department hits the outer fringe of business practice, the most obviously flagrant deception. Eyeglasses are fitted for you by mail. You are notified that you are an heir to the mythical estate of the three-centuries-dead Sir Francis Drake. You are invited to get in on the ground floor of an oyster planting concern, and earn five times your investment the first year, and twice that

the next year. You can "cure" cancer, Bright's disease, tuberculosis, or leg sores, by putting on an electric harness. If you are a shut-in, you can learn show-card writing by mail and make good money at it. These are a few of the schemes which the postal inspectors look into. If they are found beyond question to be frauds, the Department denies them the use of the mails. This is usually enough to put them out of business.

Power to deny the use of the mails is granted the Postmaster General under the law whenever he obtains evidence satisfactory to him that any person or company is conducting a "scheme or device for obtaining money or property of any kind through the mails by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations or promises."

Digging up the evidence on which the Postmaster General may act is the work of the Department's inspectors, who constitute the oldest of Uncle Sam's secret service agencies. Working without the glare of publicity, these men swing into action when complaints come in from those who have been "stung." Sometimes the Department itself may initiate the investigation because some fantastic "long-range investment" is being sold through the mails, and the suckers are waiting and not complaining.

Some 600 inspectors cover the country for fraud work. But "F" cases, as these are called in the Department,

are only a small part of their work. In addition, these inspectors have all the duties of checking on postal workers' honesty and efficiency; getting facts on the lease of quarters for post offices; revising routes and schedules; tracking down mail robbers. Their "beat" is 46,000 post offices and 250,000 employees. Only about one day in 8, of all their time year in and year out, as an average, is available for "F" cases. But sometimes a postal inspector may be assigned exclusively to a single fraud case for a year or twenty months, to track down a slick confidence man, or to prove beyond the possibility of a doubt that a Drake estate does not exist.

● **EVIDENCE** gathered by the inspectors then goes to the office of the Solicitor of the Department. The lawyers there, like the inspectors, must make themselves masters of knowledge in many fields—medicine, economics, mathematics. They must be able to prove the fraud in claims that radium water cures all manner of ills; or that fortunes can be made from certain Mexican banana lands when the banana market is already glutted; or that every participant in a sales contest has an equal chance to win, whether living in country or city, among rich neighbors or poor, whether housewife or unemployed. When the evidence has been prepared, the company or the individual involved gets a hearing before the Solicitor of the Post Office Department.



THIS COPPER BEER MUG with a false bottom is one of many variations of the "Radium Pot." Ordinary water placed in the pot is supposed to become radio-active, to cure almost anything from chicken pox to cancer. Tests showed no radio-activity whatsoever.

By the time the evidence has been gathered, many a concern has already folded up. These are the outfits which go in for quick clean-ups, and plan to get out of sight as soon as someone gets on their trail. If they go out of business, the Solicitor usually drops the fraud order proceedings. Going concerns are more than enough to keep the office of the Solicitor busy. Other concerns or individuals stick it out, and often muster eminent legal talent in their defense before the Department's Solicitor. Witnesses can usually be found to testify to anything.

Promoters may summon "experts" or "satisfied customers" of a stock promotion scheme; or people who have been "cured" by a quack remedy. Expert testimony may sometimes be bought; satisfied customers are those who have not yet lost hope of making money; cured sufferers may or may not ever have had the disease of which they say they were cured, or they may subsequently die from it.

Burden of proof, in these hearings, is on the Government's witnesses not on the company's. It is the chemists and doctors of the Food and Drug Administration who must prove for the

Post Office Department that the snake oil *cannot* cure deafness; its vendors do not have to show that it *can*.

Evidence has got to be sound, and clear in law as in fact, before the Department issues a fraud order. Concerns sometimes appeal from the Postmaster General to the courts. But courts—genuinely concerned that commercial enterprise not be deprived of any of its rights to conduct legitimate business—practically never upset the Department's fraud orders.

If the evidence produced by investigation and hearing shows that the mails are being used to defraud, the Postmaster General, acting on the Solicitor's recommendations, may issue a fraud order. This bars the concern from using the mails. All mail addressed to the firm is ordered returned to the senders, stamped in large letters: "FRAUDULENT: Mail to this address returned by order of the Postmaster General." Postmasters throughout the country are instructed not to cash money orders made out to the gyp company. Obviously it would not be practical to try to refuse all mail being sent out by the concern, because of the difficulty of identifying such mail with-

out opening it. And the fraud order does not give any postmaster the right to open first class mail not addressed to him; the law specifically bans that.

Criminal prosecution of mail swindlers is the work of the Department of Justice. Evidence which the postal inspectors have gathered is turned over to the local United States District Attorney; and he decides whether to prosecute. While the Post Office through a fraud order may put an operator out of business, the Justice Department may attempt—through the courts—to penalize the offender for the damage it is claimed he has accomplished. Conviction by a Federal jury carries with it the possibility of 5 years' imprisonment and a fine of \$1,000.

Last year, the Post Office investigated 5,429 "F" cases. Over 500 individuals or concerns were forced, by fraud orders or stipulations, to discontinue their swindling-by-mail. In just 98 of these cases, estimates place the loss to the victimized public at some 17 million dollars.

On criminal charges, 514 people were convicted last year, and fined or sent to jail, or both, for using the mails to defraud.

● **FOUR TYPES** of swindle are common. One appeals to the desire to make money easily and quickly. Oil stocks and oil lands are always to be had: Come in on the ground floor. Lotteries of all varieties call to the suckers. All are illegal; many pay no returns at all. Another has a great moneymaker for you in a company supposed to be manufacturing glass caskets, in which the deceased are miraculously preserved and happily visible. Almost a dozen versions of this company appeared, and cost trusting investors several millions.

Another appeal is to the need of a job, or the desire for some economic security in old age. One of the lowest frauds barred from the mails took 10 dollars apiece from many unemployed—often their last cash, or money borrowed with difficulty—on the promise of making them district supervisors for distribution of circulars. Nobody wanted their services—but the 10 dollars were gone. Fake insurance societies abound, which take in people

up to 85 years of age, with contracts in which the long sections in fine print set up exceptions that rule out practically every claim.

Beauty of face and figure, or the restoration of youthful vitality, is the appeal of another species of mail fraud. Put on a helmet (cost \$15) with a little blue light inside, and cure your baldness (guaranteed to grow hair on a billiard ball). Don another device, and get a Grecian profile, no matter how crooked or broad or long or snub the nose to begin with. Cures for obesity, cures for skinniness, take a parallel toll of the ignorant and the credulous. Many are poisonous, even deadly.

Mail order swindling reaches its most vicious form with the appeal to the ailing. The "glimmer racket" has taken millions from old people of bad

eyesight. Confidence men posing as eye specialists perform fictitious operations for whatever the trade will bear. Most of the victims live in the country.

Fitting glasses by mail appeals to those who are unable or unwilling to pay the cost of legitimate examination of the eyes. A Dr. Ritholz—operating under 18 different names—did a business of \$1,500,000 a year on this. He was recently put out of business.

Ionite was "curing" tuberculosis by mail—until the Post Office cracked down on this muddy-water-compound. The Anti-Flama Porous Plaster "cured" varicose veins and leg sores. It was worth a full million dollars to its sellers. Leg sores are often caused by syphilis. Syphilis cannot be cured by mail. Haelan was a tuberculosis "cure," long successfully sold through the

mails by 3 brothers, one of whom was, alas, carried off by T. B.

●MANY OF THESE have been remedies sold to the poor, who felt they could not pay for professional medical care. Of course, they often lost all chance of recovery by going to the mail order quacks. Wilshire's Ionaco, however, sold for \$65—an electrical harness, which "cured" stomach trouble, high blood pressure, and many another ailment including heart trouble. Unfortunately, Gaylord Wilshire himself died of heart trouble.

Medical frauds alone accounted for 633 investigations last year. The Postmaster General issued 55 fraud orders; 28 stipulations agreeing to quit and not resume business were accepted; in 45 cases, the people being investigated quit business. The Department figures that in these 128 cases, the public had been swindled out of about seven million dollars. No one can measure the damage to health.

Victims for these remedies may be obtained wholesale from "name brokers." An original list—of asthma sufferers, for example—will be compiled from the answers to published advertisements put forth by some asthma cure vendor. When he has exhausted its possibilities, he sells the list, for so many dollars per hundred names, to a broker. Another asthma cure concern will buy this and other lists—for somewhat more per hundred names—from the broker and circularize them by direct mail. One can buy "50,000 rheumatism sufferers," or "a thousand pernicious anemia cases."

"Every day," according to the Post Office Department, "witnesses the abstraction from the pockets of our citizens of far more money by the use of cunningly devised printed statements than is removed at the point of a gun or by threats of bodily harm."

Complaints are on the increase, and the Department reports that the work of fraud investigation piles up. More complaints do not necessarily indicate a larger number of swindles. Perhaps consumers are becoming more articulate and are exercising their right to appeal to the Postal Service when the mails bring them too suspiciously promising offers.

THE "SEX TESTER," sold through the mails to trusting poultrymen, was alleged to be a sure device for determining the sex of a hatching egg. This device showed the celluloid fish to be male, the rubber dog female.



Working Heights for Home Workers

Efficiency experts use their yardsticks to measure heights of working surfaces that will reduce fatigue from kitchen chores

"IT'S NO FUN to wash dishes," most housewives will agree. Dissension comes on the question of whether dishwashing is back-aching or merely monotonous labor. To settle such an argument as this, one needs to know the height of the kitchen sink at which the dishwasher works. A great deal of the fatigue which comes from the daily work in the kitchen may be traced to sinks, drainboards, tables, stools, chairs and cupboards that are the wrong heights for the people who use them.

Comparatively few houses are built by the people who live in them. Few people make the working equipment they use. But if the people who do design kitchen sinks and stoves knew the working heights the majority of women prefer, if carpenters building cupboards knew how high and how far most women can reach without strain, if both turned this knowledge into use, the result would undoubtedly

be more convenient kitchens for the greater proportion of renters of homes and apartments.

To ease the road to work comfort for housewives, the Agricultural Experiment Stations of Washington and Oregon last year undertook "to gather information required in setting standards for the dimensions of parts of the house used mainly by women." Results of this study are available to architects, carpenters, homebuilders, and homemakers.*

Recommended dimensions for kitchen equipment are based on the preferences of 562 women from both States who were old hands in the art of homemaking. These housewives varied greatly in physique. Some were under 5 feet, others were more than 6. One housewife was a mere slip of a thing, weighing less than 95 pounds; another tipped the scales at 242. All in all, 22 body measurements were made of each woman. When they

were analyzed, it was discovered that Mrs. Average Housewife was 5 feet 5 inches tall, and weighed 144 pounds. Average distance from the floor to her eyes was 61.1 inches; to her shoulder, 53.8 inches; elbow, 41.9; wrist, 33.1; fingertips, 26.3; sitting height, 33.5 inches. Working heights which were comfortable for her would probably be convenient for the women whose body measurements were approximately the same.

Mrs. Average Housewife, reflecting the kitchen needs of these 562 women, is interested in having convenient equipment on which to roll a pie crust, beat eggs, wash dishes, do the family ironing and cut out the family's clothes. To find out the height at

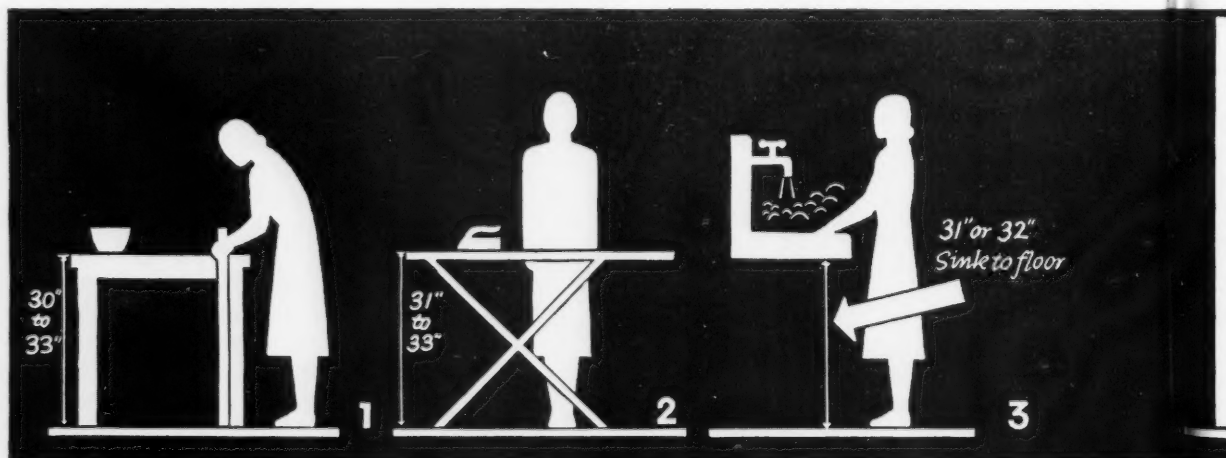
**Standards for Working Surface Heights and Other Space Units of the Dwelling, by Maud Wilson, Evelyn H. Roberts and Ruth Thayer. Bulletin 345. 1937, pp. 38. State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington.*

TO REDUCE STRAIN, adjust each height to your own and to the job you have to do. Here are suggested measurements, with a range to suit the majority of kitchen workers.

FOOD PREPARATION TABLES

IRONING BOARDS

KITCHEN SINKS



which each of these tasks can be done most efficiently with minimum fatigue, the housewives went through their routine of jobs using different size tables, boards, and sinks in the kitchen laboratory until they found the one that was just right.

When all reports were averaged it was found that Mrs. Housewife is most comfortable washing dishes when the bottom of the sink is 32 inches from the floor. For many of the women, cooperating in the study, this height was 3.5 inches higher than that of the sink in her home. Mrs. Average, also, wants the sink to be shallow—from 5 to 6 inches deep—and the rim to be as narrow as possible so that without bending forward the whole sink is within easy reach.

Drainboards of the sink often become working tables for podding peas and snipping beans. According to Mrs. Average's preferences, working at a drainboard 37 inches high—that is if the sink bottom is 32 inches from the floor and the sink is 5 inches deep—means working on a surface 5 inches too high for comfort. In small kitchens, if drainboards must be used for many tasks, the sink might be lowered an inch so that the drainboard will be an inch nearer comfort. But one inch is the most one should compromise. Mrs. Average preparing her

vegetables for dinner seems to be able to adjust quite readily to surfaces ranging to 2 inches above and below preferred heights, but when it comes to washing dishes she needs every inch of the 31- or 32-inch high sink.

• Long-time work at the drainboard and sink makes useful a 26-inch high stool with a foot rest 14 inches from the floor. Sitting on a stool this height Mrs. Average can then rest her elbows on the rim of the sink without lifting her shoulders.

Working tables come in next for measurement. When Mrs. Average stands while preparing the food for dinner she finds a surface 32 inches high about right for most tasks. Of course, if one is very tall or short this may not be a comfortable height. The range that suits people of different height usually falls between 30 and 33 inches.

For sit-down tasks a low table, 24 inches in height, is a boon to the housewife. This is the right height for a sewing table and for any tasks at which one can sit while working and is in need of a surface table for utensils. The maximum thickness of the table top should be no more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches and the table should be light in weight so Mrs. Average can easily pull it over her lap. Sixteen inches high with a seat at least 14 inches wide are recommended measurements for the companion chair. Mrs. Average, being an adjustable creature, will probably find this low table and chair a comfortable place to make the shopping list and plan the menus, but if she can afford to have every piece of equipment just right she will have a kitchen planning desk 25 inches high. If she can have neither a low work table nor desk, she may compromise by using a sliding board 24 or 25 inches high mounted in the kitchen cupboard for seated tasks. In every kitchen there should be a chair on which to sit, which is just the right height for the surface at which one works.

When Mrs. Housewife has a siege of sewing for the family, she has the habit of converting the dining room table into a cutting table. That means that when cutting the sleeve of a dress she is forced to bend over in an uncom-



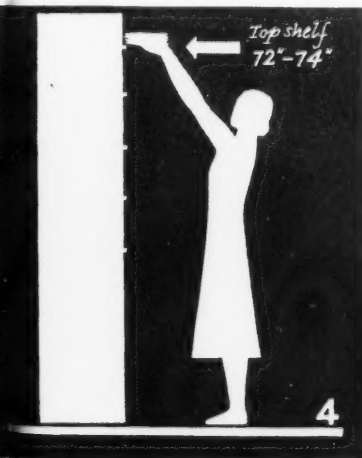
fortable position. The typical dining room table is about 5 inches too low for Mrs. Average for a cutting job. She prefers a surface $35\frac{1}{2}$ inches high for this task.

Mrs. Average Housewife has positive ideas about the height of the shelves in her kitchen. When they can be reached directly, that is when no work counters stand between her and the shelves, the top shelf for non-breakable things should be no higher than the height of her reach from floor to the tip of thumb of her upstretched arm. For the majority of women this shelf will be 79 inches from the floor. However, if there is a work counter over which one must bend in order to reach the shelf, the top shelf had better be 3 inches lower, or 76 inches.

Shelves for plates, platters, and other breakables should be on lower levels so that one can grasp them easily with two hands. To measure the maximum height for shelves to be used for such articles count the inches from the floor to the wrist of your upstretched arm. Sixty percent of the women who cooperated in the study found that they could safely lift a stack of plates from a shelf that was 74 inches from the floor. However, if there was a 12-inch work counter between them and the shelf, the top shelf would have to be some 3 inches lower.

Mrs. Housewife can turn the knob of the upper cabinet, open the latch, lock a window, snap on a ventilator switch if these fixtures are no higher than her reach, measured to the tip of her thumb. But if there is a 12-inch obstruction the latch, lock, or switch should be 3 inches lower, and if she has to bend forward over a 24-inch obstruction it should be all of 10 inches lower than the height of her reach measured to her thumb tip.

TOP SHELVES FOR BREAKABLES





Researching for Consumers

Putting science to work for homemakers, State Experiment Stations produce new rules for selecting, preparing, and handling of foods

COOKING in a "scorching" oven may be the quickest way to get a roast to the family dinner table, but keeping the oven at a low constant temperature over a longer period of time will insure a tastier meat prepared at a lower cost.

This meat maxim is not a piece of domestic guesswork but a scientific fact proved by researchers at the Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station. They found that "well-finished" cuts of meat are tastier and more efficiently prepared when cooked at low constant-temperatures than when seared at a high temperature and completed at a lower one.

Putting scientifically proved facts like these at consumers' service is but part of the work done by the experiment stations and their branches maintained throughout the country by State and Federal funds. High ranking

scientists, university professors, and specialists work at the stations to solve both farmer and consumer problems. Foods, nutrition, and domestic problems come under their searchlights. Some 4,000 experts contribute in one way or another to the work of the stations. Annually the Office of Experiment Stations of the United States Department of Agriculture summarizes their more important work. Tips culled from this have not only a general interest for the consumer, but also practical value in efficient management of households.

No minor part of the stations' work is exploring for better ways to prepare food. Trained to use precise measurements and scientific methods, equipped with modern apparatus, they are constantly seeking ways of improving the average household fare by

better cooking methods rather than by heavier outlays of cash.

MEATS

Preparation of meats, mainstay of the average family lunch or dinner, has been one of the problems attacked by these home economists.

Household chefs wishing to do full justice to beef ribs and leg of lamb roasts will keep the oven at a constant temperature of 150 degrees C. (302 degrees F.) during all the time that the roast is cooking, say the Missouri researchers. Pork loin is most often a starred item on the family menu if cooked in an oven whose constant temperature is 175 degrees C. (347 degrees F.). Less tender cuts of U. S. Medium grade beef please the palate most when cooked in an oven whose constant temperature is 150 degrees C.

To
be roa
water
the m
round
the dr
best w
a final
degree
a read
ern ho
ness"
cial m
itself.
rules,
than c
losses

W
found
other
tists a
ered to
prepar
ture o
in No
metho
and th
put th
roasted
150 t
intern

SHO
eakes
is try
feren

Top round cuts of such beef should be roasted in an uncovered pan with no water until the internal temperature of the meat is 62 degrees C. Heel-of-round cuts, tastier and more juicy if the drippings are used in a gravy, are best when cooked in covered pans to a final internal temperature of 85 to 95 degrees C. ("Internal temperature" is a readily recognizable phrase to modern housewives who check the "doneness" of their roasts by inserting special meat thermometers in the roast itself.) Time spent in following these rules, said the investigators, is more than offset by the decrease in cooking losses and fuel consumption.

What the Missouri researchers found to be true in cooking beef and other roasts at low temperatures, scientists at the Texas station also discovered to hold for chuck, rump, and ham prepared at a constant low temperature of 125 degrees C. Investigators in North Dakota tried the searing method for veal in a covered roaster, and then, with similar cuts of meat, put the meat in an open pan and roasted it at a constant temperature of 150 to 175 degrees until it had an internal temperature of 74 degrees.

SHORTENINGS have much to do with the texture and taste of cakes, pies, and breads, as any home cook knows. This researcher is trying by experiment to get at the secret of the effect of different kinds and amounts of shortening on the quality of biscuits.

The latter method took from 3 to 5 minutes longer for each pound of meat, but reduced cooking losses, resulted in a roast of a deep reddish brown with excellent aroma and flavor. These same laboratory cooks found that economy in cooking veal means choosing cuts with small proportions of bone, and using more efficient roasting methods. Whole leg and shoulder cuts of veal gave only about 2 servings for each pound of raw meat, as compared with 4 servings from the center thigh cut. Meat from the neck—used for stews—gave more servings than either of these cuts per pound of raw meat.

Cutting down the kitchen fuel bill is a common problem of most average households. The North Dakota researchers were able to slice approximately seven-eighths off fuel costs in preparing small or less tender cuts of beef, veal, and pork. They cooked them over surface burners rather than in the oven. Using a Dutch oven or drip-drop kettle with the cover removed resulted in a meat hardly distinguishable from an oven roast. The drippings should be saved for use as gravy.



Some like their roast rare, others "well done." Nutritionists agree that much of the dietary value of meats is found in its "juiciness." Scientists at the Minnesota Station wanted to know whether a rare meat really contains more and richer juice than one well done. They cooked two cuts of beef to internal temperatures of 58 degrees and 75 degrees, respectively. Result was that the one cooked for a shorter period of time had 11 percent more juice than the well done cut. Not only was this true, but chemical tests revealed that the juice of the rarer roast had more nutritional value than the other.

BEANS

How to cook Great Northern and Navy beans to a palatable state has been solved in the foods laboratory at the Nebraska Station. Analyzed chemically, the beans were discovered to have a large amount of calcium in their coats. Clue to softening the coats was found to be similar to that for softening hard water: addition of a strong salt, such as sodium bicarbonate or baking soda, to the water. Also, the Nebraska workers discovered that storing the beans in sealed jars at the relatively high temperatures of 72 to 80 degrees F., or sometimes at temperatures as low as 45 degrees F., would result in better cooking quality of the beans when used.

POTATOES

Potatoes are big items of income for farmers in many States and experiment station scientists are continually at work seeking to improve the use of this dietary asset in the household. From the Pennsylvania station comes a warning that the outward appearance of the potato—except when it is poorly shaped or obviously not full grown—is



14 no key to its internal quality. This finding was paralleled by scientists at the Maine station. Their advice to consumers says that "inspection at the market may enable one to avoid lots which will give excessive paring waste, but neither appearance nor variety can insure uniform cooking varieties." They suggest that you should first test sample potatoes from one lot under cooking conditions in the home before purchasing a large supply of them.

Baking potatoes rather than boiling them leaves the tuber with more nutritional value, the Pennsylvania researchers discovered. A baked potato loses about 25 percent of its moisture content, leaving a much higher proportion of starch. The Maine station again paralleled this discovery with the finding that generally a greater percentage of starch or dry matter in the potato means more mealiness to the tuber. To retain the mealiness, they said that the potatoes should be cooked at relatively high temperatures. Do not allow steam to remain in the kettle after the cooking is complete. The Maine scientists thought that both baking and boiling potatoes are superior to steaming to achieve the highest degree of mealiness.

HOW TO STORE POTATOES without injuring their quality and palatability troubles domestic cook and restaurant chef alike. In this kitchen two laboratory workers test potatoes kept under various storage temperatures.



Also from Maine came a simple household remedy to combat blackening of potatoes. The blackening, said the Maine researchers, is due to reactions of chemicals in water on certain substances in the potatoes. The old-fashioned practice of soaking the pared potatoes for 2½ hours before they are cooked is one simple way of avoiding this frequent bane of the housewife. Another is to cook the potatoes in milk or to add milk immediately after the potatoes are mashed.

A more scientific approach—particularly from the farmer's angle—to prevent blackening of potatoes lies in treatment of the soil in which they are grown, according to the Wisconsin Station scientists. They found that a lack of potassium in the soil lowers the quality of the potatoes. Their suggestion: Treat the soil with good supplies of potash.

SHORTENINGS

Lard rarely rates tops with amateur cooks as a shortening agent in making cakes. Used in the same way as butter it frequently results in a cake whose flavor and texture are bad. Experimenters at the Nebraska and North Dakota stations confirmed amateur

prejudices when they found that lard used as the only shortening with cake flour gave a poor batter, resulted in cakes with low volume, poor texture and crumb, shiny crust, and a marked flavor and odor.

The North Dakota station tried a few variations on the formula, however, and discovered that excellent cakes can be made with lard if the proper methods are followed. Their advice is this when using lard as a shortening agent: Increase the amount of shortening and decrease the liquid and sugar. Don't mix all the ingredients dry, but set aside part of the sugar to use with the egg white as a meringue. And, finally, a better color and texture of the crust will result with a lower oven temperature than is usually used.

Workers at Iowa State College, concentrating their efforts on pastry and cookies, confirmed what many amateur cooks know: that lard is the best, and butter the poorest, shortening agent for pastry; and that the type of shortening agent used in certain cookies is not as important as in pastry. Using hydrogenated cottonseed oil and hydrogenated lard in making pastry, the Iowa researchers concluded that these rated between lard and butter as shortening agents.

FOOD SPOILAGE

Tracing down causes of contamination of food products or outbreaks of food infection often comes within the work of the stations. How these laboratory sleuths uncovered the source of contamination of some frankfurters from a manufacturing plant is told in a story from the Michigan station. The researchers there set on the trail of the bacteria causing the spoilage when it was revealed that the number of bacteria in each frankfurter rose from 4.5 to 22,400 during the course of the product's manufacture and storage.

Cause of the spoilage was found to be twofold: (1) the air used for drying the frankfurters was drawn by electric fan from a passageway with a dirty floor; and (2) no attempt was made to purify the air used for the circulation system in the cold-storage

[Concluded on page 19]

"The article also pointed out that, according to the Food and Drug Administration's investigation of fumigating practices '15 out of 104 concerns admitted using hydrocyanic acid on fruit which was held in storage before shipping.' This would, of course, clear the other 89 companies queried. Moreover, it was emphasized, 'as a result of the investigation, the use of hydrocyanic acid has been discontinued by the dry fruit packing industry.'"

Reporting on the work of consumer protection sometimes involves mentioning cases. The reader will understand it is usually the exceptional which makes the news. That is the problem of all newswriting. People in other lands read reports of crimes in America, and some of them think no American is safe from holdup or kidnapping. We know better.

"WHAT IS salt-rising bread?" Salt-rising bread is a bread which is leavened by a kind of bacteria that causes fermentation, instead of by yeast. Corn meal contains the bacteria, and that is the "starter" for the housewife who makes this bread at home. Commercial bakers use a special culture of the bacteria which gives a more uniform quality.

Salt-rising bread is moister and more crumbly than bread raised with yeast, and not as light. A higher temperature is used for the sponge and the dough than for yeast bread.

For a recipe for homemade salt-rising bread—and for many another recipe—just write the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for "Homemade Bread, Cake, and Pastry." This is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1775. Copies are free while the supply lasts.

IN THE MAILBOX, we find an announcement of a series of three "Consumer Forum Luncheons," sponsored by a group of 9 Philadelphia organizations. Getting down to practical questions of daily food buying, these monthly luncheon forums—an extension of a one-day forum held in Philadelphia last November—put up for discussion these questions:



CONSUMERS' MAILBOX

WRITING about the work of Government agencies entrusted by law with regulatory functions in behalf of consumers always brings up this question: How much space can be given to detection of law breakers without condemning an entire industry, the honest and careful along with the careless and unscrupulous? Our article on last year's work of the Food and Drug Administration ("On Guard for Consumers," Nov. 29, 1937) brought us a letter from a gentleman in Rhode Island. Here is the letter in full:

"I have been a continuous subscriber ever since the *Consumers' Guide* has been issued, and I have always been interested in reading the data which you supply in such an interesting way.

"I am wondering whether the giving of publicity to such items as appear on page 3 of your November 29 edition is quite a good policy, and is quite fair.

"It is a good advertisement for the excellent work which the Food and Drug Administration is carrying on. For instance, the detection of the hydrocyanic acid in the raisins is interesting, and very important. But I wonder whether the effect it will have on the consumption of raisins from all innocent manufacturers, who are honest and would not think of having their raisins contaminated, has been considered by you in giving the publicity to this one case of contaminated raisins.

"My personal reaction after reading the article would be to avoid raisins in every way this Christmas, and I have no doubt that until the effect

of the publicity which you have given this case has worn off that I shall avoid the use of raisins.

"This reaction of mine, is, of course, not fair to the other manufacturers of raisins who form the great majority, and who are endeavoring to live up in every way to produce the best raisins possible, but nevertheless the data which you have put out in this article will tend to injure a great many innocent people."

To which we have responded, in part:

"It has been our policy in the *Consumers' Guide*, when we call attention to commercial practices injurious to consumers, to attempt to give some indication of their relative importance. In this case, I agree with you that we might very well have inserted a sentence to the effect that the situation described in this article is not characteristic of the marketing of raisins generally.

"I am confident you would agree that complete silence from the Government on the activities of the Food and Drug Administration would be a definite disservice to consumers. If these activities are to be reported on, it is obvious that incidents such as this one of the raisins are bound to be disturbing. A certain amount of skepticism on the part of consumers in buying is a salutary thing not only for themselves but also for the conscientious manufacturer and distributor. In saying this, I do not wish to obscure our obligation to deal fairly with the honest merchant and distributor by avoiding implications which a specific situation does not justify.

16 I—BUYING MEAT

Is all meat purchased in Philadelphia inspected?

Do all retailers sell graded meat?

How can I tell whether the meat I buy is inspected and graded?

II—BUYING EGGS

Should I buy brown or white eggs?

Should I buy eggs by weight?

How can I be sure of getting fresh eggs?

III—BUYING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Should I buy green or white asparagus, and why?

When are new potatoes ripe?

What precautions make sprayed fruit and vegetables safe?

Joining together to hold these meetings are the Association of Philadelphia Settlements; Pennsylvania League of Women Voters; Philadelphia Club of Advertising Women; Philadelphia Dietetic Association; Philadelphia Federation of Women's Clubs, Home and Citizenship Committee; Philadelphia League of Women Voters; Philadelphia Public Schools, Department of Home Economics; Women's University Club; and the Young Women's Christian Association.

●
"AFTER READING your discussion of cod liver and other fish oils, we would like to know: How do you take out cod liver oil spots?" asks a California reader.

To answer one question with another: Is the stain new or old? For a fresh stain, rub promptly with a little dry cleaning solvent, such as carbon tetrachloride. Then wash the stained fabric in lukewarm suds.

Old, dark stains are harder to remove. Bleaching the fabric may be necessary. If the stained material is white cotton or linen, a chlorine bleach will do the trick. If the stain is on white silk or wool, soak the article in fresh peroxide, wash in lukewarm suds, and rinse.

●
"ARE paper milk bottles cheaper than glass?" asks a Pennsylvania consumer, curious to know how the cost of milk to her might be reduced.

It depends on whether you are

thinking of original cost, or cost per average bottle of milk sold. Paper containers are used once and then thrown away. Glass bottles are used over and over again. Original cost of glass bottles is usually higher than that of "single-service" containers. Cost per quart of milk per trip may be just the other way around: The paper containers costing more than glass. But the kind of container used for milk may affect other marketing costs, and this must be counted in any comparison of the relative costliness of glass and paper.

Just a few days ago, the Attorney General of New York State, reporting to the Governor on the milk industry in that State, had this to say about paper containers:

"Another step in the program to decrease wholesale delivery costs is said to be the encouragement of more extensive use of paper containers. Milk dealers were all agreed that no practical disadvantage resulted from the use of paper containers. From all points of view it was equally as satisfactory as glass bottles. From the point of delivery, it was found possible for a company delivering nothing but paper contained milk to deliver that milk at a cost of less than one cent per quart, including all selling, administration, general and overhead expenses. The reason for this great economy lies in the fact that a paper quart container of milk weighs less than half of a bottle of milk and in addition takes up much less room. The load usually handled by a 5-ton truck filled with glass bottles could be adequately handled by a 3-ton truck carrying only paper contained milk alone. Furthermore, no problem of picking up cases or bottles is involved. The drawback, of course, is that paper containers cost between 1.4 cents and 1.7 cents per unit and unlike glass can be used but once. When the additional container cost is added on to the reduced delivery cost, the net result is the same as total glass bottle delivery costs. It has been stated that when public acceptance of paper bottles becomes more general, increased production will result in lower container costs."

Other studies in other places may

change or confirm these conclusions. The use of paper containers is too new—and, so far, too limited—to have provided a final yes or no answer to our correspondent.

Unlike a man before the bar of justice who is assumed innocent until proved guilty, new products and new methods charged with upsetting our normal ways of doing business are often assumed to be guilty until proved innocent. Sometimes the opportunity to exonerate themselves comes slowly and begrudgingly. In the case of paper containers for milk, that opportunity seems to be on the increase. From last reports, milk companies in New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Cleveland, Detroit, and Baltimore, are experimenting with these new "bottles."

●
"WE HAVE a chance to open a store in the near future. We understand that a cooperative in a neighboring State obtained a loan to open its store. Can you tell me from what department (of the Federal Government) this was obtained, and what procedure is necessary to make application?" So writes the secretary of a consumer's cooperative in New Jersey.

The question of Government loans to cooperatives comes up frequently. The Federal Government has no power under existing law to make loans to consumer cooperatives such as the one described by our correspondent. Farmers' purchasing associations may secure loans from the Farm Credit Administration for the cooperative buying of supplies used in production on the farm—feed, seed, fertilizer, etc. Rural electric cooperatives may obtain advances from the Rural Electrification Administration. Otherwise the Government makes no loans to consumer co-ops.

The President's Inquiry on Cooperative Enterprise in Europe recommended that consumer cooperatives be given "credit parity" with other business enterprises, but did not indicate any methods for implementing this recommendation. A Consumers' Cooperative Credit Bill was introduced in the House during the Seventy-fourth Congress but failed of passage.

EVERY LIBRARY, said Oliver Wendell Holmes, "should try to be complete on something, if it were only the history of pinheads."

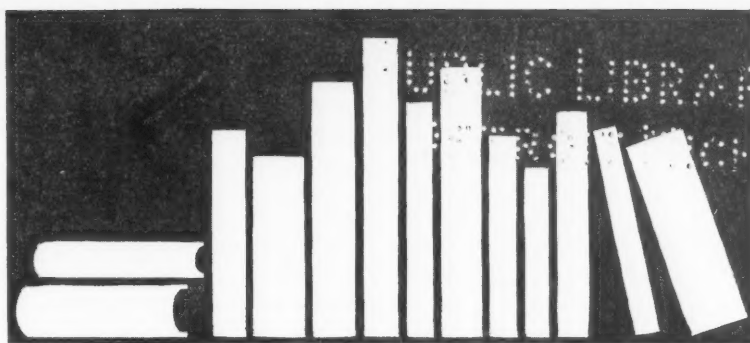
Achieving such a standard on pinheads may have its troubles. We've never tried it, so we don't know for sure. We *have* attempted to lay the foundations for a low-cost library of consumer literature, and we know full well both the trials and delights of such an undertaking.

Almost each new day, certainly each new month, brings rumors of another treatise on the consumer and his problems. Tracking down these rumors, ferreting out all the precious documents, getting hands on them and eyes through them, is a fulltime job for many hands and many heads. We haven't got that many. Within our limitations—and with the help of the Consumers' Project of the Department of Labor—we have made a beginning on a consumer library.

We now announce the release of the first and—to date—the most complete bibliography of free or low-cost bulletins on commodity buying and other consumer problems. Its title is: *Consumers' Bookshelf*, and it can be purchased for 15 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

This 100-page guide to foundation material for any consumer library will answer the question of thousands of schools and clubs, and of hundreds of thousands of homemakers: "Where can we get material to help us with our consumer problems?"

Packed in its pages are references to the best available material put out by Federal Government agencies, State Extension Services, and various non-profit organizations which can be counted on for disinterested informa-



CONSUMERS' BOOKSHELF

tion. Publications of commercial organizations are included in sections where governmental material is lacking, if the information given is useful and disinterested. Bulletins of a technical nature are excluded, except those dealing with specific commodities on which the number of nontechnical bulletins is very limited.

All kinds of household and personal necessities are covered in references to bulletins on commodity buying. There is a section on "Clothing and Textiles." Food bulletins range through bread, cereals, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, meats, and sea foods. Other food bulletins give facts about standards of diet and nutrition, how to preserve foods, and on the most troublesome food problem of all—how to get the best nutritive values for your money. Dozens of references cover household articles from beds to vacuum cleaners.

Another stretch of 15 pages covers free and low-cost bulletins giving buying information on a wide miscellany of commodities: antiseptics, automobiles, cleaning supplies, cosmetics, dentifrices, disinfectants, fuel, garden equipment, inks, leather, lumber, paints and varnishes, polishes, radios, school supplies, and so on.

Related consumer problems come in for their share of attention in a second section. Here are listed bulletins on budgeting problems, on consumer credit, on health and plans for medical care, home maintenance and repair, home planning, and on the popular and highly important subject of standards, grades, and labels.

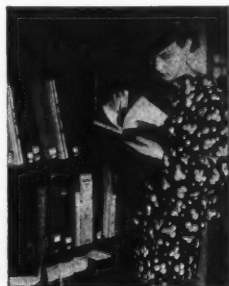
Guides to teaching materials, on how to organize and direct consumer study come in a section called "Aids for Teachers of Consumer Problems."

Finally, there are references to bibliographies published by other agencies from which still further material for those whose problems are not already answered or who are undertaking exhaustive research, can be obtained.

Throughout the booklet, the contents of each item listed are briefly but clearly described. All necessary directions for ordering are included. Before any item was listed, we checked with its publisher to make certain that it was available at the time this bibliography went to press. Readers should remember, however, that free and low-cost bulletins are of a rather perishable nature. "Fugitive" material, the librarians call it. Supplies are usually more quickly exhausted than editions of books. Early orders are the luckiest.

Here are three kinds of people for whom we are sure this bibliography will serve a useful purpose: consumers who want disinterested information on how to spend wisely and economically; teachers who want to help students to become discriminating consumers; and leaders of consumer organizations who find consumer problems a stimulating and worthwhile field of study and action.

Order your copy from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. Again, its title: *Consumers' Bookshelf*. Its price: 15 cents. Send cash or money order. Stamps are not accepted.



18 BEHIND THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE COUNTER

[Concluded from page 5]

penses and remits the rest to the grower. But suppose he reports he has sold the grapefruit at a price less than that he actually received, or suppose in reporting expenses he reports more expenses than he actually had.

To stamp out unfair and fraudulent practices of dealers in fruits and vegetables, the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act of 1930 forbids commission merchants, dealers, and brokers to indulge in certain specified unfair and fraudulent practices, chief of which are rejection of shipments without reasonable cause, and failure truly and correctly to account for purchases or consignments. Under the Act the Secretary of Agriculture through the Bureau of Agricultural Economics is able to settle with a minimum amount of cost and inconvenience to the interested parties a large percentage of the disputes arising in the fruit and vegetable trade. Up to April 1937, from the time of the passage of the Act, there were 16 thousand complaints of which 60 percent were settled without formal hearings.

Fraud and malpractice together were only two of the problems that arose out of long-distance fruit and vegetable shipments. When a farmer took his produce into the market himself, he could see what prices prevailed and he could market accordingly. Today, however, with farmers in Texas or California, markets thousands of miles away, and with a thousand and one markets to which they can ship, there always arises the problem of where to ship. Without market information, they might ship to New York the same day every other farmer ships to New York with the result that New York is glutted and shortages appear at Baltimore and Atlanta and Philadelphia and New Orleans.

● **ACCURATE** market information is the answer to this. In 1915 the Department of Agriculture established its Market News Service as a part of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Starting with 26 reporters in 10 cities, this service now has reporters in

41 markets who exchange information with each other and all cooperating agencies daily by telegraph. Reports are issued daily in each of these markets showing shipments from all principal producing sections, receipts, car unloads, prices and market conditions. Special reporters issue daily reports showing shipments from all competing sections, prices paid producers and prices received in a few principal receiving markets. Cooperating with the Market News Service, the State agricultural agencies and the city markets also collect information, clear it daily with market information received from the Market News Service through 200 radio stations and hundreds of newspapers, to keep growers, distributors, processors, and consumers informed of fruit and vegetable trends.

A major disturbing factor in the information picture is the motor truck. While railroad and boat shipments are reported with complete accuracy, no method has yet been devised to predict and report all the movements of motor trucks.

● **CITY DWELLERS, wage earners,** and salaried employers know something about grocery bills, and the notes that are due on the automobile, but unlike farmers they do not need to finance themselves over an entire year pending the receipt of the major part of their income at one time. The necessity for this kind of financing makes credit facilities for farmers of prime importance.

Farmers are financed by cash loans, and by the advance of seeds, plants, fertilizer, and supplies on credit. They obtain this credit from city fruit and vegetable dealers, dealers in their own farm communities, banks, cooperatives, fertilizer companies, seed and plant dealers, and most recently and most importantly from the production credit associations formed under the Farm Credit Administration.

Government agencies are not dragon teeth soldiers that spring up full-grown from the earth. Farmers suffered many abuses before the Farm Credit Act of 1933 enabled them to take their credit and let the abuses go. And for that matter, some of the abuses still persist. Some Texas onion

growers, for example, are financed by plant dealers who advance farmers the young plants from which the onions are grown and, for this, usually take a proportion of the crop together with an option to buy the rest of it at the market price. Other fruit and vegetable growers in Texas are financed by city dealers in fruits and vegetables who require the farmers to sell their produce to them. Canners sometimes finance crops. Fertilizer companies, in order to make sales, give farmers production credit. California fruit and vegetable growers are financed to a large extent by city dealers in fruits and vegetables. A standard practice is for the grower to ship to the dealer one carload of fruits and vegetables for sale for every hundred dollars he has borrowed. Financing by banks is available usually only to those farmers whose operations are so large that financing is no problem with them anyway.

Farmers, complaining about some of the commercial methods of financing, state that interest rates are high, that they are overcharged when financing takes the form of advances of supplies, and that, finally, if they have to agree to sell their produce through the lender they lose control of their crops, and in many cases become unable to market their products as effectively as they could otherwise.

● **COOPERATIVES** usually encourage their members to form production credit associations, but in Florida and in some cases in California they borrow money from city produce dealers for their members.

Production credit associations are formed by farmer borrowers but financed by the Farm Credit Administration corporation in the district. A farmer borrows money at low interest rates (5 percent today) from his association and then the association takes the farmer's note to a Federal Intermediate Credit Bank which advances money on the note to the association so that the funds it has are self-renewing. Insofar as possible, the loans are made for the period from planting time to harvest time. These loans leave farmers completely free to market their produce as advantageously as possible.

RESE
FOR
[Concl
room.
tamina
who v
except
amine
over S
made
State i
The "I
each fr
antees
nation
JUICE
Resear
ing fru
tions'
make t
York S
tical hi
can be
with th
Do
1. H
2. T
3. W
4. W
5. H
6. H
7. W
8. W
9. W
10. W
11. W
12. W
13. W
14. W
15. H
16. W

RESEARCHING FOR CONSUMERS

[Concluded from page 14]

room. (Protection against such contamination is possible for consumers who watch the label. With minor exceptions, Federal food inspectors examine all frankfurter products going over State lines. Inspection is also made of products staying inside the State if the manufacturer desires it. The "U. S. No. 1" grade stamped on each frankfurter or its container guarantees not only freedom from contamination but a high-grade meat product.)

JUICES AND SIRUPS

Researching for new ideas in preserving fruit juices is a part of some stations' programs. For consumers who make their own grape juice, the New York State station offers a few practical hints. Deterioration of the juice can be prevented if the bottles are filled with the hot juice to drive out the air

from the juice and the head space of the bottle. Two simple presses—both of which can be made in the home—have been developed by experimenters at the station. Other information on the best methods of preparing grape juice are contained in Circular 166, *Making Grape Juice in the Home*. This can probably be obtained by writing to the station at Geneva, N. Y.

Rhubarb juice—whose preparation is too complex for the home—is a new development of the New York State station recommended for blending with citrus, berry, and other juices. The juice is also thought to have possibilities as the base for a soft drink to serve American palates.

Researchers at the Tennessee station developed a simple method for making strawberry juice or semi-sirup in the home. Heat the sirup to about 190 degrees F. and keep it at that temperature for 15 minutes. Then squeeze it through muslin, adding two pounds

of sugar to each quart of juice. Pour the warm semi-sirup into sterile bottles, then cap and keep them for a half hour submerged in water heated to 175 degrees. The resulting juice is recommended as sauce on ice cream, for blending in fruit punches.

Buttercup squash has come into its own at the North Dakota station through its possibilities of making a "palatable sirup of distinct flavor." The sirup, prepared by experimenters at the station, is said to be lighter in color than molasses and bears a resemblance to sorgho sirup. At the Florida station, something new in the way of novel sweetening sirups was developed by blending citrus juices with cane juice before the cane juice was evaporated to sirup. The Florida researchers think that the proportion of citrus juice to cane juice should not exceed 1 to 7. Expert tasters have found the blended sirup to be even superior in flavor to the pure cane sirup.

Do You Know . . .

1. How important to farmers was their sale of fruits and vegetables in 1937?
2. Three ways that weather complicates the business of fruit and vegetable growers?
3. Why some of the fruits and vegetables farmers grow for market never leave the farm?
4. What is the purpose of the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act of 1930? What conditions brought it about?
5. How market news reporting helps farmers to get bigger incomes?
6. How financing problems of farmers are different from those of city workers?
7. What three objections farmers have to some of the commercial methods of financing their crops?
8. What is the purpose of Production Credit Associations?
9. When the Postmaster General has the right to refuse the use of the mails to people?
10. What are some of the different kinds of swindles that have been tracked down by the Post Office?
11. What is a fraud order, when and how it is issued?
12. What are some of the rules which efficiency experts recommend to reduce fatigue from kitchen work?
13. Which produces better results: roasting meat in a very hot oven, or in moderate heat?
14. Which kind of potato is supposed to have more nutritional value: a baked, or a boiled one?
15. How can you get good results in cake making by using lard as a shortening?
16. What new source book for consumers has the Consumers' Counsel Division just published?

OUR POINT OF VIEW

The CONSUMERS' GUIDE believes that consumption is the end and purpose of production . . .

To that end the *Consumers' Guide* emphasizes the consumer's right to full and correct information on prices, quality of commodities, and on costs and efficiency of distribution. It aims to aid consumers in making wise and economical purchases by reporting changes in prices and costs of food and farm commodities. It relates these changes to developments in the agricultural and general programs of national recovery. It reports on cooperative efforts which are being made by individuals and groups of consumers to obtain the greatest possible value for their expenditures.

The producer of raw materials—the farmer—is dependent upon the consuming power of the people. Likewise, the consumer depends upon the sustained producing power of agriculture. The common interests of consumers and of agriculture far outweigh diversity of interests.

While the *Consumers' Guide* makes public official data of the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and Commerce, the point of view expressed in its pages does not necessarily reflect official policy but is a presentation of governmental and nongovernmental measures looking toward the advancement of consumers' interests.

IN THIS ISSUE

APRIL 11, 1938 • VOLUME V, NUMBER 1

Behind the Fruit and Vegetable Counter . . .	3
Post Office Guardians of Consumers	7
Working Heights for Home Workers	10
Researching for Consumers	12
Consumers' Mailbox	15
Consumers' Bookshelf	17

